

We must never be disappointed of the Divine Grace

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The topic chosen from the Chapter, Role of *Abhyasi*, in Silence Speaks is a profound instruction from the Divine Master to all of us and is almost of the nature of an injunction which every *abhyasi* keenly desirous of attaining the ultimate objective ought to obey. The subject of divine grace poses its own challenges to the dialectical, categorizing and discriminating intellect though the cultivated, purified and devoted heart of the real seeker is able to receive, acknowledge and have a direct intuitive perception of it in an authentic manner. We have all imperienced just now that very Divine Grace showered on us bounteously by the gracious all-

loving Master, the Light of the Day, whose heart is ever full of it and who is ever impatient to fill up all pining hearts. It is also the experience of the regular *abhyasis* that whenever they sought the assistance of their trainers they were never disappointed in that they received the *Pranahuti*. However we all appreciate the need to understand Master's statement in the way it ought to be and that happens to be our real duty as well. The discussion I present before you is one such attempt.

The Master defines constant remembrance and describes the exalted states in spirituality which could be attained through remembrance in the article from which the topic is selected. He says, 'The more you go deep into this thought (associated with the idea of a fellow being who is merged in the absolute) the more of the coverings of subtler nature shall be torn off one by one, till finally the one-original- alone comes

into view. Now since the origin is in view he shall be blessed with the direct divine grace' (Ref. 1 p308). There can not be a more direct clue to the *abhyasi* than in the above as to the object of his loving remembrance. The efficacy of remembrance has been extolled by the Master at every opportunity He gets to do so. The saying found in our diary for 30th April declares remembrance as the instrument for attaining the destination (the Unknown) which is not far off.

Master asks us to love Him who loves all for attaining complete success in our noble endeavour. One of the effects of remembrance in its highest flights is the development of sameness which leads the aspirant to the transcendent state of devotion described by Kabir in the words, 'my mind can be at rest only when the Lord gets busy with the remembrance of me'. At this stage the lover has become beloved. The role of remembrance in *sadhana* is to water the seed of reality which is infused into

the *abhyasi*'s heart at the time of introduction; it is the instrument to ensure speedy progress and eventual success in our pursuit.

The topical sentence is followed by a discussion dealing with maintaining regularity of *sadhana* in the presence of inner disturbances. The *abhyasi* should not feel disheartened; he should feel himself bankrupt and carry on with his worship and devotion unmindful of the disturbances with firm resolve and in a spirit of duty to be done in obedience to Master's commandment even as the elephant marches on undisturbed despite the barking of dogs. Master interprets the metaphor, 'barking of dogs' to mean unregulated and ill-disciplined activities of the mind and the sense organs. The *abhyasi* should have firm faith and confidence in Master's grace and support right through his endeavour for realizing his true nature and this will enable him to develop the required endurance and

forbearance in the midst of the difficulties caused (*adyatmic*) by the unregulated activities of his mind and senses. He should have realized his responsibility and have trained them in the first place such that they do not pose any problem in *sadhana*. The Master advises against a direct repressive confrontation with the 'barking dogs' for their control which is likely to turn them offensive and violent. He recommends their indirect and effective control through the practice of meditation and remembrance. He makes a very significant point when he says the inner state of mind developed through the practices should be such that even animals begin to take in its effect and become calm and controlled. We realize that stabilization in the 'U' plane and especially in the virtues of *ahimsa*, *prema*, *karuna* and *maitri* towards all beings can bring about such a result. Our literature is quite rich in the discussion of the efficacy of the methods of practice in particular the 'A' & 'B'

meditations, cleaning practices and diversion through *Pranahuti* from 'L' to 'U' in bringing about regulation and discipline in the activities of the mind and the senses. Hence I will not be discussing this aspect any further.

I would however draw your attention to the Master's commentary on the 4th commandment which deals with the problem of the restless and downward tendencies of the mind coupled with the runaway senses and the effective solution to the same. Considering Master's advice for resorting to remembrance as a solution to the problem discussed, we note that remembering the Master effectively by the *abhyasi* with an earnest desire for regaining balance and regulation in his *vrittis* and senses while in the midst of tempting circumstances creates a vacuum in his heart inviting the flow of Master's grace bringing about the necessary order.

It is well appreciated that mind and speech fail miserably in knowing God or the Divine and we may say that equal if not greater is the difficulty in understanding the nature and operation of Divine Grace. The great minds of spiritually illumined souls blessed with God vision in an authentic manner more or less profound have tried to fathom the depths of this concept and the various religious and spiritual traditions contain such wisdom. The direct apprehension of God and discerning of His nature being virtually impossible for the ordinary run of mortals like us, we have to depend upon the teachings of God-realized souls for gaining some understanding of the subject. Their teachings become the *Pramanas* called *apta vachana* and even *sabda* or *sruti*, the very *veda* itself in some very special cases such as in the case of the Divine Masters Rev. Lalaji Saheb and Babuji Maharaj who have established an irrevocable connection with the very Source and

not only that have also secured mergence therein.

The Masters of our Order as we are aware have direct intuitional and revelational imperiences of the Divine which constitute another important *Pramana* viz., that of *anubhava* imparting authenticity to their utterances on such subjects which are beyond the reach of the ordinary intellect. I intend to take up mainly the various teachings of the Master as contained in *Showers of Divine Grace* and *Silence Speaks* through the course of this discussion for showing how they could bring about a better understanding of the topic on hand. I feel that we should first have a reasonable understanding of what constitutes Divine Grace before we get to the operative part of the topical sentence namely, 'we must never be disappointed of it'. My attempt would be to show that the moment we get enough clarity as to the nature of Divine Grace, we would readily

appreciate the justification behind the Master's directive already referred to.

It has been widely held by the seers that the incarnating soul has to take innumerable births through countless wombs covering the mineral, plant and animal domains, go through enormous suffering and struggles before it secures even the first one of the three blessings, this is getting a human birth. The difficulty is three folds greater in the exponential sense, if we were to treat the problem according to the laws of probability, for the soul if it were to be content with self- effort alone.

As Master puts it , 'The problem before us is not to find out a solution of our present life but for all lives that we may henceforth have—It is not mere deliverance from pain and misery but freedom from bondage which is the ultimate cause of pain and misery' (Ref. 2). Thus we

ought to think of the innumerable lives of suffering and unending trouble we can save for ourselves just by following His loving instructions and have the bare minimum goal of securing liberation which would signal the end of our pains and miseries.

Some reflection would tell us that, the Master is like the mother who cajoles using like terms the adamant child which refuses to take the bitter and unpleasant medicine which would result in the cure of its sickness. This sacrifice consists in sparing time for the *sadhana* practices, *indriya nigraha*, terminating superfluous activities, saying 'no' to audio visual entertainment, refraining from undue involvement with friends and relatives and the subduing of our lower nature while implementing the Ten commandments. The sincere aspirant would see that the sacrifice is nothing but his legitimate duty, a duty to be discharged for the sake of the

discharge of the prime duty of man, namely of realizing his real nature and living according to it. Serious *sadhakas* would realize that what we can get in turn for the little sacrifice is something which is inconceivably great envied even by the gods viz., the life in God, by God and for God

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All of us here have the greatest of good fortunes in having established our connections with the great Master and enjoy His continuous support on this, our dynamic Path of Grace vibrant with *Pranahuti*, the Divine *Pranasya Prana*. This naturally reminds us of the Master's saying, 'A man is not fit for spiritual training unless and until he has developed the capacity of fomenting the disciples with superior force which is all in all ... they should first judge their fitness to deserve such a Master. Sometimes, fortune favours and one gets such a Master even though one is not fit for the best sort of training. In that case there is nothing but the grace of God'. (Ref. 3)

The incidence of divine grace may be viewed from two angles, the subjective or the standpoint of the utterly devoted seeker who feels with gratitude that he has been blessed with divine favour ill-deserving though he is in every respect. The feeling of worthlessness is created in such a seeker because he keeps always his abject lowliness before the Master/God in his view. Taking the viewpoint of the divine, grace is its response to the fervent prayer of the devout heart which has totally surrendered to Him alone seeking His succour in the hour of crisis. The devotee feels that he has been blessed with divine grace when he is faced with situations wherein a task which is humanly impossible is accomplished, insurmountable obstacles are overcome; the person is blessed with bounties entirely disproportionate to his deservingness especially in the spiritual realm; the person is saved from an all consuming existential crisis of

adyatmika nature or an extraordinary gain is made from very little effort.

We also find in the functioning of divine grace a great leverage or multiplication factor operating on our puny insignificant efforts (We may recall here the rules used in Game of Life!). Thus according to the words of Saint Kabir the Lord takes ten steps towards for each step taken towards Him by the *grihasta* whose heart is full of love for Him. The Master says almost identically (Ref. 4), 'Whoever moves one step towards it (Goal), the goal advances ten steps towards him.' In fact He calls it as a divine assurance in which we shall have firm faith.

If we examine the idea of divine grace, it will be found that it is closely tied up with our conception regarding God/Divine. In this context I would like to draw your attention to discussions dealing with conceptions of God as found in the

articles of our brother K.C. Narayana (Ref. 5, 7). There are three principal viewpoints regarding God mentioned in Ref. 5 namely,

(1) the conception of God as masculine, paternal and unsympathetic, viz., the Creator, the King, the Father, the Judge and the Old man up there, the outer God. (2) God as maternal and feminine though not necessarily female, the conception arising out of adoration. The devotees seek tender care, kindness, a caressing and caring individual and this emotional along with the aesthetic need for sensing and appreciating beauty are responsible for the origin of such conception termed as the Inner God. (3) The third idea of God arises from our imperiences in meditation in the Natural Path in which the presence of a reverential 'Suchness' is intuited, such an awareness granting us the conviction that we are one with all that exists or rather all that exists is One. The limitations imposed by multiplicity and the sense of separateness in

particular are transcended in this insight gained through the imperience.

The subject matter of divine grace is obviously related to the second viewpoint of God; God's Grace is often deemed in the tradition to be vested in His inseparable spouse, the compassionate Divine Mother and this may be regarded as His feminine aspect. The masculine aspect is connected with lordship, protection, administering justice, punishing the wicked, running the universe (*jagatvyapara*) and so on. We may say it is justice of the father tempered with the mercy and saving grace of the mother. The divine attributes such as *kripa* or *anugraha* (grace), *daya* (mercy), *prema* (love), *kshama* (patience and forgiveness) are all personified by the mother. She is the compassionate intercessor between the souls and God, pleading with Him to forgive the sins and various transgressions of the repentant souls and

recommends the soul for His acceptance. In the *visishtadvaita* tradition she is the chief of all preceptors and the surrender to the Divine Lord is to be made through Sri alone. We can also see that grace requires the platform provided by unconditional love, overflowing mercy, forbearance of even gross wrong doings, preparedness to ignore the past transgressions of the soul and readiness to forgive on the part of the Divine. It is to be noted however that when we mention the above as viewpoints it is surely not meant that they are mere speculative conjectures on the contrary they are intimate relationship (*sambhanda*) imperiences felt in the heart by earnest devotees at a particular stage of their spiritual evolution. We may even say that the view points arise because of those intense imperiences which inform the intellect.

In this context we may consider the Master's recommendation,

‘The conception of a Guru as a mother is, in my opinion, by far the most appropriate and advantageous to a disciple. A mother is the very embodiment of love and affection. Only a mother’s heart can forbear with patience all the troubles and miseries caused to her (by the) son thinking all the while of trying to provide for her son’s comfort and happiness. The same is the position of the real Master or Guru who is the spiritual mother of the disciple.—The conception of the Guru as the spiritual mother promotes within us the feelings of love, reverence and surrender which are the main factors of a spiritual life’ (Ref.6). We are all aware of the exclusive devotion of our Master to His Master who is all in all to Him. He says that even God is secondary to Him as it is only His Master who granted Him deliverance and enabled Him to attain the highest approach possible to a human being. God who is inaccessible in His transcendent status takes, according to tradition,

the form of the real Guru out of compassion, for the redemption, spiritual upliftment and transformation of the souls who are caught up in the snare of their own making constituted by the illusory ego sense of separation, desire fulfillment and sense enjoyment. Thus divine grace is Master's grace for all practical purposes. By the logic, *brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*, we may say that the Guru who has truly realized and secured his mergence in God would naturally display the divine attributes. We know and have imperienced our Master as the *sanatana* or eternal and essentially nameless consciousness called lovingly by us as Sriramchandra Consciousness to be characterized by unalloyed unconditional love and infinite compassion. Hence we can safely conclude that God is indeed compassionate and gracious! In this connection we may note Master's observation,

‘As a matter of fact what we really stand in need of for our ultimate purpose is only divine grace. But owing to inner complexities it is almost beyond the capacity of a *sadhaka* to have it for himself. For that reason master’s help is indispensable. In the earlier stages divine grace flows into the *abhyasi* only through the medium of the master as such it is often interpreted as master’s grace. Whether it comes through the medium of the master or direct it is divine grace in both cases.’ (Ref. 8)

As our Master points out it is Lord Krishna who introduced love and devotion or *bhakti* into *Rajayoga*. The Master also has accepted this as a very useful means for attaining perfection in the Natural Path; we would scarcely find any of His teachings which do not mention love and devotion, He Himself standing out as devotee par excellence to be emulated totally by every aspirant on the path. *Bhakti* as expounded in the

ancient traditions and the religions is invariably linked with the idea of the Supreme God-Person possessed of an infinite number of auspicious attributes.

This implies duality, the devotee and the God of his devotion. One can not conceive of *bhakti* or worship to a non-person God. Thus the 'Suchness' concept of God would not fit in this context as there is no duality possible, our very selves having been completely negated as we keep moving towards Absolute Oneness.

The discussion presented in Ref.7, (*satya padam. Krishna janmashtami* 2006 talk by Bro. K.C. Narayana) examines the concept of God from a very illuminative standpoint which has a strong bearing on the stages of spiritual ascent on the Natural Path and contains in my opinion the justification for the God viewpoint considered above. I am confining myself to the relevant

portion- 'Para 11- when we view the Master in first person we get one who is a granter of our wishes and the pinnacle experience in such cases can be *Aham Brahmasmi*. Para 12- when we view the Master in second person 'Thou' we move into the realm of devotion and surrender. Para 13- when we view the Master in third person 'IT' or 'Tam' we get a special personality who is working out the transformation of human consciousness in which we have a part to play so that we live in an enlightened world'. We know that nothingness is the goal and negation is the route. The stage of *prapanna* opens the door to negation and therefore the second person viewpoint of God turns out to be very crucial in attaining to this most important step in the evolutionary ladder of the human being.

The notion of God as the Centre from which the energy or the *Kshob* issues forth for bringing about creation appears rather impersonal and

the statement of Master that God has no mind does make it difficult for us to conceive how grace operates. However we may see that its function is automatic and the very nature of God is gracious when we consider Master's saying, 'We see everything tending towards the Centre and the Centre itself yawning towards the circumference. After our adventure we initiated the value of our existence and felt the cooperation of the highest power around us' (Ref. 9). The centre yawning towards the circumference is the process of *pranahuti* as we all know practically through imperiencing this divine influx repeatedly. Again He says, 'When the world emerged into the present form the central point was already rooted deep in all the beings. This being a part of the Supreme it turns our attention towards the Source. In prayer we try to reach up to that point.' (Ref. 10) 'Thus everything that comes into activity by the divine flow tends to fly towards the Origin. Man has

also inherited the same tendency. So when his downward tendency is checked the thought of reaching the Origin automatically revives in his heart.' (Ref.11)

Thus it appears to be the case of an eternal inescapable mutual attraction between God and His off-springs conscious or otherwise even like the attraction between unlike charges of electricity, iron filings and the magnet and the gravitational attraction between material bodies as seen in the manifest physical nature. It is however natural for us embodied as human beings to describe the arising and operation of grace of God in anthropomorphic terms. The end result is the same whether we try to understand grace through the view of an impersonal automatic process or that of the personal loving compassionate feeling-response of the inseparable spouse of God. It is not necessary to know about the recipe and the

cook for enjoying the sweet pudding. The Creator has to care for the created who are nothing but His own very limbs or *amsas* having been created for the fulfillment of His own purpose. The organic view of the universe pervaded and interpenetrated by God and all the constituent parts of the universe, sentient and insentient regarded as His limbs enjoying an inseparable mutually interdependent relationship with Him looks best suited for an explanation.

The Master has described the dynamics of divine grace, or in other words, how it is set into motion, in the following words, 'There must be one thought, one object and one pursuit in view and that must be related with the divine. That is the type of mania which I wish every one to develop in himself. When god feels that there is one in quest of him the divine grace is set into motion to take him in. If the quest continues with a pining heart it becomes so forceful that the

Lord himself sets out in quest of him. The intensity of eagerness with restless impatience creates within him a vacuum for the divine grace to flow in establishing a connecting channel between the two'. (Ref.12)

Divine grace is indispensable for complete success in our sadhana. Liberation is not possible unless we are able to outgrow the limitations imposed by maya.

The Lord says in the Gita (7.14) that *maya*, the veiling and binding power constituted by the three *gunas* (*daivi hyesha gunamayee maya mama*) whirling the helpless creatures mounted on the engine of nature (*yantrarudani mayaya*), is His own power. He says further it is extremely difficult to be crossed over (*duratyaya*) except by the devotee who has surrendered to Him alone. The Master says regarding *maya*, 'It is a Godly power which has brought into existence the entire creation in its different forms and shapes

and which regulates its entire workings. We are all the while surrounded by this great power and its effect is visible in all phases of our activity. We are whirling round in the glossy sphere of *maya* clinging at times to one or the other object in view thinking it to be Reality.—

We remain entangled within the snare of *maya* without any hope of emancipation until we divert our attention towards the unchanging Reality at the root' (Ref. 13). We stand in need of the grace of a Master of caliber endowed with the power of *Pranahuti* for escaping the clutches of *maya* and achieve the much praised liberation from the unending cycles of birth and death in one lifetime even as promised in our system.

The Master emphasizes the cardinal importance of divine grace in the path saying, 'In our spiritual march we proceed from point to point crossing from one point to another after covering the intervening spaces known as buffers.... Now

if one attempts it by mere self effort he gets hopelessly involved in its intricacies and remains held up indefinitely within it. One has to be favoured with divine grace to cross them- the power that can take us safely along through all those intricacies can definitely be one who has established an irrevocable connection with the divine source' (Ref.14).

We may now examine the role of self effort in relation to divine grace. Master says, 'Self effort is just the means of making oneself deserving of divine grace' (Ref.15). Self effort is absolutely essential along with Master's support which is nothing but divine grace in operation for attaining the supreme goal of life. There has been a lot of discussion in the tradition about God's grace being *nirhetuka* (spontaneous and without reason) but Master's position is quite clear. The hall mark of His approach is practice and sincere hard work. Even the most trivial task

such as feeding oneself involves the exertion of the body and mind as self effort. When we are aspiring to achieve the *summum bonum* of life that is God-realization, it is patently obvious that one has to apply his body, mind and heart to the task and be prepared for any sacrifice. Master quotes in one of His writings a popular couplet which means that if Hari could be got by giving off one's head, the bargain is still cheap.

Summing up, we as abhyasis connected to the great Master through Rev. Dr. KCV Order and having the good fortune of loving guidance of our capable guide can say with certainty that we have divine grace in abundant measure going by the yardsticks indicated in the above discussion., namely,

- 1) we are on the Natural Path and it is certainly due to the grace of God as per Master's saying, 'it depends upon one's own judgment and the grace of God to get the real method to solve the

mystery of one's life' (Ref.16). Also we will do well to acknowledge the spiritual fact revealed by the Master that *sahajmarg* or the Natural Path itself has not arisen accidentally but has been given graciously to mankind waiting in eager expectation.

- 2)getting the connection to the great Master the eternally present Supreme Personality
- 3)having the divine influx of *pranahuti* on a regular basis
- 4)the responsive and loving guidance of a person who has traveled the path and is endowed with practical spiritual wisdom

If only we can count our blessings mentioned above and be grateful to God for the same we can never be disappointed of divine grace. Disappointment can arise only from a feeling of lack and as our position is to the contrary there is no issue. Disappointment can arise from

comparison, contrast and expectations. The development of *santushti* (inner contentment) and the realization that God is *samavarthi* and we are only enjoying the result of our own actions being makers of our own fate would prevent the occurrence of disappointment. The experience of miseries and being wronged by others can disturb our faith and make us feel disappointed of His grace. A firm adherence to commandments 5 and 7 would correct the situation for which we need to have firm unshakeable faith or *shraddha* in the Master, in His capacity to deliver us from all miseries and bondage and the knowledge that He knows what is best for us.

To meet fully the requirement 'we must never be disappointed of divine grace', the aspirant has to be fully stabilized in *titiksha* (endurance), *shraddha* (firm faith) and *samadhana* (settledness) keeping in view the spiritual fact

that God is the supreme Master and His will must be carried out in every respect, or putting it in other words, he must be fully established in *prapanna gati*. All of us can derive inspiration and strength from Master's saying, 'I myself am very weak and worn out with age. Still I am doing my best to bring real peace to humanity.. What we have to do is only to have a strong grip always on divinity. I never felt disappointed and worked single handed and the result is before us all. I have full confidence in myself, with the master's hand at my back; it has always worked. The same thing I want from all of you.' (Ref.17) The referenced message contains Master's gracious invitation to all noble men and women for participation in the divine work He has been entrusted with for transforming human consciousness. We ought to consider it an extraordinary blessing to be invited thus by the great Master for participating in the divine work, accept the same in all reverential humility and

cooperate with Him as duty bound in the spirit enshrined in the sentence 'Service is the only concern of the serf'.

Pranam.

References:-

Ref.1 - Silence Speaks (307-14); Ref. 2 - Dawn of Reality 2002 Edition (15-6); Ref. 3 – Showers of Divine Grace (145-6); Ref. 4 – Showers of Divine Grace 174; Ref. 5 – Bodhayanti Parasparam V (165-8); Ref. 6 - Dawn of Reality (95-6); Ref. 7 - SathyaPadhamu (13-3-39); Ref. 8 – Silence Speaks 187; Ref. 9 Showers of Divine Grace 56; Ref. 10 – Imperience Beckons 27; Ref. 11 Imperience Beckons 13; Ref. 12 – Silence Speaks (53-4); Ref. 13 – Sruti 595; Ref. 14 – Silence Speaks (193-4); Ref. 15 – Showers of Divine Grace (19-21); Ref. 16 –

Showers of Divine Grace 143; Ref. 17 –
Showers of Divine Grace 159.